

Vine Mealybug

NOT KNOWN TO
OCCUR IN IDAHO



Common name: Vine Mealybug

Scientific name: *Planococcus ficus*

The vine mealybug is an economic pest of vineyards in the Mediterranean region of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, as well as in South Africa, Pakistan, and Argentina. It is currently localized in all grape-growing regions of California.

Description

Vine mealybugs are small (adult females are about 1/8 inch in length), soft, oval, flat, distinctly segmented, and covered with a white, mealy wax that extends into spines (filaments along the body margin and the posterior end). The vine mealybug has a pinkish body that is visible through the powdery wax, and it is slightly smaller than the *Pseudococcus* mealybugs. The waxy filaments that protrude from the body of the vine mealybug are shorter than those on the *Pseudococcus* mealybugs, and the vine mealybug does not possess long tail filaments. The adult male is smaller than the female, has wings, and flies short distances to mate. There are three to seven generations a year.

Host

Although it has only been found on grapes so far in California, alternate hosts include fig, avocado, mango, and pomegranate, oleander, dahlia, bamboo, walnut, *Dichrostachys glomerata*, mesquite, *Tephrosia purpurea*, date palm, sycamore, jujube, apple, quince, willow, cacao, and styrax.

Life Cycle

All or most life stages of the vine mealybug can be present year-round on a vine depending on the grape-growing region. In the North Coast of California, during winter months, the only life stages found are nymphs located under the bark predominately at the graft union, on trunk pruning wounds, and below the base of spurs. In other regions during the winter months, vine mealybug eggs, crawlers, nymphs, and adults are under the bark, within developing buds, and on roots.

As temperatures warm in spring, vine mealybug populations increase and become more visible as they move from the roots and trunk to the cordons and canopy. By late spring and summer,

vine mealybugs are found on all parts of the vine: hidden under bark and exposed on trunks, cordons, first- and second-year canes, leaves, clusters, and roots. Ants may transport vine mealybug from the roots to above ground plant parts where they continue to tend vine mealybugs throughout the remainder of the growing season.

Damage

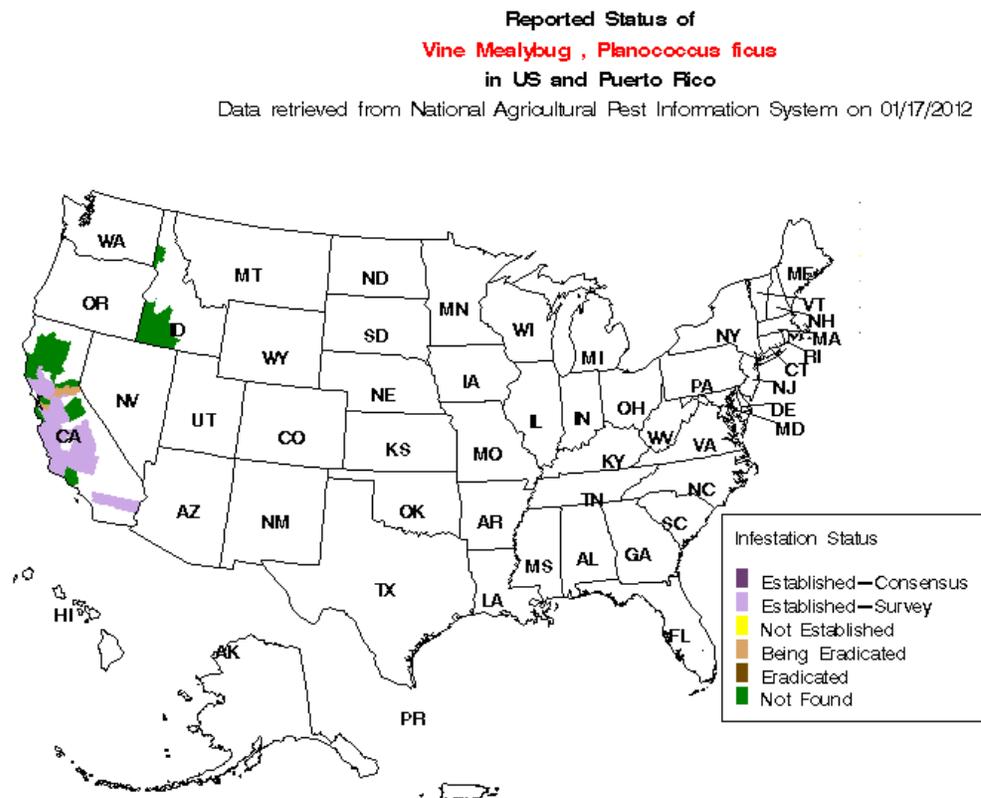
Damage by the vine mealybug is similar to that of other grape-infesting mealybugs in that it produces honeydew that drops onto the bunches and other vine parts and serves as a substrate for black sooty mold. If ants are not present, a vine with a large population of this pest can have so much honeydew that it resembles candle wax. Also, the mealybug itself will be found infesting bunches making them unfit for consumption. Like the grape, obscure, and longtailed mealybugs, vine mealybug can transmit grape viruses.

Other Resources

<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/r302301911.html>

<http://vinemealybug.uckac.edu/VMB.htm>

http://cenapa.ucdavis.edu/Viticulture/Vine_Mealybug.htm



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